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THE MONTHLY GULL BULLETIN

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

VOLUME 9 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY, 1927 NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 10th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Board Room of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, Ferry Building, 2nd Floor, Room 19.

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. E. W. Gifford, Curator, the Museum of Anthropology, University of California, the subject being, "Breeding Tropical Pigeons in California." Mr. Gifford will have a number of live pigeons there by way of exhibit.

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ANNUAL DUES ARE PAYABLE IN JANUARY. Members will greatly facilitate the work of a busy Treasurer by remitting same without further notification. Note name and address of new Treasurer on the last page.

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FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP: Will be taken to Easton on Sunday, February 13th. Party will form at corner of Fifth and Market Sts., San Francisco, to take motor bus leaving there about 8:55 a. m. East Bay members should reach Ferry Building not later than 8:20 and take car up Market to Fifth St. Bring lunch and canteens filled as there is no drinking water at luncheon place. Leave bus at Easton Drive. Walk to top of ridge for lunch; to San Andreas Lake and back to highway at Uncle Tom's Cabin, about nine miles. Return by bus or trolley. Bus fare, twenty-five cents each way.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING: The tenth annual meeting of the Association was held on January 13th, in the Board Room of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, with Mr. Carl Smith, President, in the chair; Mr. I. M. Parry, Secretary; thirty members and guests present.

Annual reports were submitted by the President, Treasurer and Chairman of the Outing Committee.

Officers and Directors for 1927 were elected as follows:

President	Dr. Frederick W. D'Evelyn
First Vice-President	Mrs. A. S. Kibbe
Second Vice-President	Mr. Arthur H. Myer
Recording Secretary	Mrs. Carl Smith
Corresponding Secretary	Mr. C. B. Lastreto
Treasurer	Mr. Chas. Bryant
Director	Mr. Carl Smith
Director	Mr. I. M. Parry
Director	Mrs. G. Earle Kelly

The feature of the evening consisted of a most instructive and entertaining address on "How Birds Fly." Dr. Sterling Bunnell opened up many new channels of thought by comparing the structure and flight of an aeroplane with that of a bird. As Dr. Bunnell has made a close study of this subject it is sincerely hoped that he will publish his observations.

It would take a person well versed in the science of aeronautics to give even an outline of Dr. Bunnell's lecture so I will attempt to give only a few interesting points.

Birds make use of the updraughts as is seen by gulls gliding on the windward side of the boat in contrast to the flapping of wings on the lee side. In the city when the air is calm on the street, gulls will be seen soaring around the top of some high building. The smoke will at the same time be rising in a straight column, showing that the birds have found an air chimney.

Buzzards and hawks soar on the windy sides of ridges. This can be easily observed on the Bolinas Ridge, where frequently numbers of red tail hawks glide in graceful curves not because the food supply in that vicinity is more plentiful than elsewhere, but because the air currents there are so favorable for their gliding.

Some birds, as pelicans, frigate birds, boobies, etc., choose nesting sites on the windward side of islands or cliffs, because the young birds, as well as the adults, can then take advantage of the updraughts on leaving the nests.

The flapping of birds' wings is more for propulsion than for uplift. The wings have a sculling motion that drives the bird forward and by the spreading shape of the wings the flight is sustained just as with a monoplane. A duck in level flight exemplifies this. It travels at from sixty to ninety miles an hour.

Only the strongest birds, such as the hummer, swallow or pigeon can fly directly upwards and then only for a very limited distance. Birds gain their altitude by flying up at a moderate incline. They are really gliding forwards and upwards and the flapping furnishes the propulsion.

Birds, like planes, always take off and alight into the wind. Some must flap and run along the ground or water to get up flying speed. Some, like murres, fly close to the water to gain the reflected uplift. Pointed wings give less resistance to forward motion. Some birds, like buzzards, have the ends interdigited, which amounts to the same thing.

Birds use the principle of the dihedral angle of an aeroplane. That is, the wings are held at an upward angle to the horizontal, which gives great lateral stability. Sea gulls when arching their wings in rough air form this angle in the inner halves of the wings.

In conclusion, Dr. Bunnell remarked that agile creatures are happy things and as birds by their ability to fly are certainly the most agile of creatures it is little wonder that they like to express their joy of living by bursting into song in the early morning, giving the world a most delightful concert.

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CENSUS OF BIRDS' NESTS IN THE MUSIC CONCOURSE.

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, in 1926.

(See Gull, Jan. '20; Feb. '21; Mar. '23; Jan. '24; Feb. '25; Feb. '26)

As has been customary for several years past, a census was taken of the birds' nests that had been built in the spring and summer of 1926, in the

trees of the music concourse. The time of taking this census varies considerably with weather conditions, but it usually is in December, early or late, according to how soon the wind, rain, and temperature succeed in removing from the closely pruned trees sufficient of the dead foliage to expose to view all of the nests. Unusually warm weather in the autumn of 1926, and absence of killing frosts, greatly delayed the falling of the leaves and even brought out new shoots, and frequent rains caused the nests to decay, so that, by the time that the trees were sufficiently bare for thorough examination, many of the nests were in bad shape for determination of ownership.

As far as it was possible to ascertain, the ownership and status of the nests were as follows: Brood apparently raised—California Linnet, 4; Willow Goldfinch, 1; Nuttall's Sparrow, 5; unidentified, 1. Nests robbed—Nuttall's Sparrow, 2; Western Robin, 1. Deserted—California Linnet, 2; Western Robin, 2. Finished, but apparently unused—California Linnet, 5; Nuttall's Sparrow, 2. Unfinished—California Linnet, 1; English Sparrow, 2; Willow Goldfinch, 1; Nuttall's Sparrow, 5; unidentified, 2. Total, 36. In a Nuttall's Sparrow nest there was a skeleton of a bird; in the robbed nests there were evidences of the robbery; and one deserted nest contained a set of eggs, the appearance of which had not been improved by time and the elements.

It is evident that the enemies of the birds which use these trees as nesting places are as numerous as ever and as persistent in their predatory activities. In taking this annual census, evidence, in the form of two of their nests, was discovered showing that the park squirrels (the Northern Fox Squirrel, imported from the Middle West) had decided that the shelter which so well suited the birds would be good also for themselves, and that they had acted upon this decision. This year the number of nests dropped considerably behind that of the previous year, but excelled that of 1924 by one. The percentage of broods that apparently were raised, however, was greater, being 30.8 per cent for 1926, as against 23.6 per cent in 1925 and 17.1 per cent in 1924.—Joseph Mailliard, *California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California.*

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THE JANUARY FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 15th, to Lake Merritt, Oakland. Would one believe that on a day which threatened to be so wet, fifteen bird enthusiasts would turn out—five of whom were from San Francisco? The weather cleared and the party was rewarded for being present.

After finding a few land birds in the park, the group assembled for the 10 o'clock feeding at the lake. Gulls, pintails, baldpates, mallards and coots surrounded the attendant who was scattering grain. There were also white-fronted and lesser snow geese with one or two spoonbills.

Later in the afternoon Messrs. Thomas and Smith reported having seen a single redhead, the first of that species to be seen in three years.

Few birds were noticed in Trestle Glen due to the large amount of building.

Birds seen were: Western, eared and pied billed grebes; Glaucous winged, Western, herring, California, ring billed and Bonaparte gulls; Farallone cormorant; white pelican; mallard, baldpate, shoveller, pintail, redhead, canvas back, scaup, American golden-eye, buffle-head and ruddy ducks; lesser snow, white-fronted, Hutchins and cackling geese; coot. Land birds: red shafted flicker; Anna hummingbird; California jay; Brewer black bird; Nuttall, golden crown and song sparrows; San Francisco and California towhees; Audubon warbler; plain titmouse; bushtit; wrentit; ruby crowned kinglet; hermit thrush and robin. Forty-two species.

Members present were Mesdames Kibbe, Futley, Myer; Misses Ayer, Crum, Cockefair; Messrs. Smith, Bryant, Myer. Visitors present were Misses Carnahan, Edith Ayer, Barbara Hansen, Ella Tatum; Messrs. Kenneth Zwerin, Manny Blue and Thomas.

MRS. ETHEL L. MYER, *Historian.*

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ANNUAL CENSUS OF WATER FOWL AT LAKE MERRITT OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

For the past few years on the Sunday of the Association's Field Trip to Lake Merritt, Mr. A. S. Kibbe made a census of the water birds at the lake. Messrs. Joseph Dixon and George M. Wright continued the good work by making the following report.

They state that the building of the pens to catch the ducks so that they can be banded appears to have frightened the Pintails away, temporarily, at least.

The annual count of the wild fowl at Lake Merritt was taken this year on the morning of January 21, from 9:30 to 11:30 o'clock, with the following results:

Canvas-back	811	Cormorant	5
Baldpate	355	Mallard	4
Coot	350	American Golden-eye	4
Pintail	233	Western Grebe	4
Ring-billed Gull	201	Glaucous-winged Gull	4
Scaup	73	Buffle-head	2
Shoveller	33	California Gull	2
Ruddy	30	White Pelican	1
Eared Grebe	20		
Snow Goose	6	Total	2,138

The greatest decrease was noted among the Pintails. Their absence at this time appears to be due to local disturbances.

JOSEPH DIXON,
GEORGE M. WRIGHT,
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Berkeley, California, January 21, 1927.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Recording Secretary	Mrs. Carl Smith	563 Forty-second Ave., San Francisco
Corresponding Secretary	C. B. Lastreto	260 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer	Chas. Bryant	Room 1011, 65 Market St., San Francisco

Meets second Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the State Board of Harbor Commissioners, Ferry Building, Second Floor, Room 19.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. G. Earle Kelly, 1311 Grand St., Alameda

Subscription to Bulletin alone, 35c. per year. Membership dues, payable January 1, $3.00 per year.